

Special Housing

In order to provide additional housing opportunities, the OCHA has expanded the list of available housing types to include shared housing, congregate care, homeownership and project-based opportunities. These special housing types will offer a broader array of housing opportunities to our clients. However, these options may require that Voucher holders who take advantage of them, accept special conditions for housing as part of their lease or ownership agreements.

A. SHARED HOUSING

Single Individuals and Two-person Households with a one-bedroom Voucher may utilize their Section 8 Vouchers to occupy a bedroom in a qualified unit. Such qualified unit is defined in this Plan. There will be a separate Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract and lease for each assisted family in a shared housing unit. Maximum rent calculation will be based on the single-room occupancy standard (75% of the “0” bedroom Voucher standard). The utility allowance will not be granted in any shared housing contract.

The Request for Tenancy Approval (RTA) must state that this is a shared housing proposal and must be signed by the property owner or management agent. The OCHA will inspect the proposed shared housing unit to determine the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) for the sleeping room, kitchen facilities, bathroom facilities and other living spaces available to the tenant at the unit.

Elderly and/or Disabled/Handicapped Individuals may elect to form a shared housing mutually assisted family under reasonable accommodation regulations and can be issued a Voucher for the appropriate bedroom size to allow such expanded families to share a housing unit. Such families need to have had Section 8 Rental Assistance Vouchers, which have been issued to each member of the proposed mutually assisted family, and be elderly and/or disabled/handicapped. They must state in writing their request to form such a mutually assisted family and the reasons/benefits that they believe would provide for reasonable accommodation. Said statement should be directed to the Chief of Special Housing Programs for the OCHA, 1770 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, CA 92706.

Upon review, a mutually assisted family that includes two or more existing Voucher holders may be recognized as a new Voucher family. Only one head-of-household will be designated. The other member(s) of the mutually assisted family will surrender their Voucher(s), and their doing so will be noted in the file. If, in the future, the mutually assisted family breaks apart, each member thereof surrendering his or her Voucher will regain the Voucher.

Leasing activity will be the same as any other Voucher holders after the re-issuance of the new multi-bedroom Section 8 Voucher for mutual assistance.

B. CONGREGATE CARE

Single individuals may elect to utilize their Section 8 Vouchers in congregate care facilities. The fact that the proposed unit is a congregate care facility must be noted on the RTA and must be signed by the property owner or management agent. The OCHA will inspect the proposed sleeping room and other facilities available to the tenant.

The rent calculation will be based on the single-room occupancy standard (75% of the “0” bedroom Voucher standard). No utility allowance will be granted for any congregate care contract.

No payments may be made for security, administration, medical activities or food provided at the congregate care facility. HAP payments can only cover housing expenses.

C. HOMEOWNERSHIP

The OCHA has initiated a pilot program to explore the feasibility of utilizing Section 8 Housing Vouchers for homeownership opportunities as allowed under HUD regulations. This program option is described in Chapter 30, “Homeownership,” and will only be available if the OCHA is successful in obtaining technical assistance from a nonprofit or other partner organization(s) that will provide homeownership counseling,

lender coordination or other required program components. If the OCHA is successful in designing its homeownership option for Section 8 Housing Vouchers, participation will be limited to participants or new Section 8 Housing Voucher holders, who meet the necessary criteria for income and/or down payments as required by lenders and the program guidelines. Eligible properties must be realistic for potential purchase through this program and located in the OCHA's jurisdiction.

D. PROJECT-BASED ASSISTANCE

The OCHA may elect to enter into project-based assistance (PBA) contracts for Section 8 Voucher holders as part of its initiatives to expand housing opportunities and enhance deconcentration strategies. The OCHA will advertise opportunities for PBA in conjunction with the Housing Development Section of H & CD. A competitive process will be used to review and select project proposals. The Board of Commissioners shall approve each allocation of Housing Vouchers that are committed projects.

The maximum term for PBA contracts shall not exceed ten (10) years. Eligible projects shall consist of newly constructed and vacant units. The OCHA's allocation of project-based assistance shall not exceed 100 Housing Vouchers per fiscal year. However, the OCHA may increase the available allocation if additional housing units are targeted for "hard-to-house" Section 8 Voucher holders. "Hard-to-house" as defined by HUD is a household consisting of 3 or more minors or a disabled person. In accordance with HUD guidelines, the maximum number of units available under PBA will not exceed 20 percent of the OCHA baseline allocation.

Residents of PBA units shall be OCHA Section 8 Voucher holders. The OCHA will refer potential PBA residents for each approved project in accordance with tenant admission requirements. Owners/managers of PBA projects will screen and select tenants based on admission requirements that comply with federal, state and local Fair Housing rules. The following priorities will be used to refer and select PBA residents:

1. Priority one will be Section 8 Voucher holders that are seeking their initial lease;
2. Priority two will be Section 8 Voucher holders that request to relocate to the complex and who meet the resident qualifications of the project;
3. Priority three will be households on the OCHA waiting list who meet resident qualifications of the project;
4. If there are not sufficient eligible applicants that meet the criteria in the above 3 priorities, the OCHA will re-open its waiting list in accordance with HUD guidelines to accept pre-applications from targeted applicants that will meet the resident qualifications of the project.

Residents of PBA units will comply with all rules and regulations governing Section 8 Tenant-Based Assistance and may elect to relocate after residing in the PBA unit for 12-consecutive months. The OCHA will maintain its commitment to refer and assist Section 8 Voucher holders in vacant PBA units for the term of the PBA contract.

